

Chair Dembrow and members of the committee:

I am writing in opposition to Senate Bill 398. The bill's intent is to create a new type of hunting tag outside the existing hunting and elk damage framework: an "elk depredation hunting tag". This tag would authorize a person to take an elk of any sex or age during an elk hunting season in the two years following the issuance of the tag.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife sets elk hunting seasons on a yearly basis based on the population modeling for each unit. This additional tag would completely bypass the scientific research done to support existing hunts and allow elk to be taken up to two years after their presence regardless of the state of the elk Management Objective for the unit no matter the reason for their presence on private property, be it a winter snow incident, lack of suitable forage on nearby public ground or an obstacle preventing travel in a wildlife corridor. In addition, the bill has no requirement that any non-lethal means be used to attempt to move the elk off of the private property to avoid **depredation**.

I fully appreciate that private property owners are stakeholders in managing the wildlife of the state of Oregon and thank them for doing so. If one is to create an "elk depredation hunting tag", one needs to show evidence of elk **depredation** on the landscape; elk **presence** does not equate to elk **depredation**.

Steve Hagan

Northwest Director At-Large, Oregon Hunters Association